

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A complete listing of the claims is as follows. The claim identifiers represent the status of the claims as they stand following the decision on petition, of November 14, 2003, whereby claim groupings I, II, and III would be examined together. Claims directed to groupings IV, V, and VI (*viz.*, claims 25-30, 32, 33, 36, 37, 38) are identified below as being *withdrawn*.

112/112 Claim 1. (*Original*) A sole for a boot, especially a sports boot, said sole comprising:

a front portion and a rear portion more rigid in longitudinal bending than the

front portion,

at least one reinforcement in said two portions, wherein:

the front portion comprises a front half-sole affixed to the reinforcement;

the rear portion comprises a rear half-sole affixed to the reinforcement;

and

the front and rear half-soles are assembled to one another in a junction zone, preferably, by cementing and/or riveting and/or welding.

112/112 Claim 2. (*Currently Amended*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the limit between the flexible front portion and the rigid rear portion is located substantially at the rear of a portion of the sole adapted to correspond to the so-called metatarsophalangeal bending zone of a wearer's foot.

Claim 3. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the two front and rear half-soles overlap one another in the junction zone and wherein the length of the junction zone is adjustable depending on the size.

Claim 4. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 3, wherein the rear half-sole (seen from the bottom) overlaps the front half-sole in the junction zone.

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Claim 5. (*Currently Amended*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the junction/overlapping zone is located in and/or behind a portion of the sole adapted to correspond to the so-called metatarsophalangeal bending zone of a wearer's foot.

Claim 6. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein it includes a reinforcement constituted by at least one laminated or non-laminated plate extending from the junction zone, both on at least half of the front portion and on at least half of the rear portion.

Claim 7. (*Currently Amended*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcement has a length corresponding substantially to at least 60% ~~60%, preferably at least 70% and even more preferably at least 80%~~, of the length of the sole.

Claim 8. (*Currently Amended*) A sole ~~according to claim 1, wherein~~ for a sports boot, ~~especially a sports boot, said sole comprising:~~

a front portion and a rear portion, the rear portion being more rigid in longitudinal bending than the front portion;

at least one reinforcement extending along both of said two portions, wherein:

the front portion comprises a front half-sole affixed to the reinforcement;

the rear portion comprises a rear half-sole affixed to the reinforcement;

at least one of said its front and/or rear portions has a construction is designed to cooperate with a sports apparatus; and

the front and rear half-soles are assembled to one another in a junction zone by cementing and/or riveting and/or welding.

Claim 9. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the front or rear half-soles is constituted by at least one piece for guiding and for connecting to a sports apparatus.

Claim 10. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 9, wherein the sole ~~it~~ has, on a its lower surface, in the front portion and/or rear portion:

- at least one guiding member, adapted to cooperate with complementarily shaped guiding support ~~guiding means~~ provided on a sports apparatus, ~~preferably a gliding support, to which the sole being adapted is designed to be coupled to the sports apparatus; and~~
~~possibly, at least one adherent and wear-resisting pad.~~

Claim 11. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcement is assembled to the front and rear portions of the sole by cementing.

Claim 12. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the front or rear (preferably front) half-soles is duplicate molded on the reinforcement, this duplicate molding ^{method} being preferably selected from the moldable plastic materials, reinforced or non-reinforced, and having appropriate mechanical qualities for rigidity in the rear portion and flexibility in the front portion. ^{method} ^{method}

Claim 13. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 12, wherein the front half-sole is duplicate molded on the reinforcement, and wherein the rear half-sole is cemented on the reinforcement.

Claim 14. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcement is made of a composite material.

Claim 15. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcement has a sandwich structure.

Claim 16. (*Previously Presented*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcement has a sandwich structure having a thickness less than or equal to 3 mm.

Claim 17. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcement is a plate covered, at least on one of its surfaces, with at least one compatibility layer, advantageously constituted by at least one synthetic film forming polymer, especially selected from the group including polyamides and/or polyolefines and/or polyurethanes.

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Claim 18. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 12, wherein the reinforcement is a plate comprising perforations adapted to enable the passage of bridges of molding material(s) connecting the portions of the half-sole located above and beneath the reinforcement.

Claim 19. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the front portion comprises at least one element for coupling to a gliding support.

Claim 20. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein, in the rear portion, the reinforcement has one or several upward extensions, and/or is associated with at least one other reinforcement.

Claim 21. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the rear portion forms an integral assembly with a stiffener covering the heel, the rear portion preferably having a different, and even more preferably greater rigidity than that of the stiffener.

Claim 22. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the front half-sole, the rear half-sole, the reinforcement, and possible the stiffener, are made of different materials.

Claim 23. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein it is an outer sole.

Claim 24. (*Original*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein it includes one or several recesses provided at least in its lower surface and showing a portion of the reinforcement.

Claim 25. (*Withdrawn*) A method of manufacturing a sole according to claim 1, said method comprises:

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- using a plate adapted to be the reinforcement of the sole and having a form corresponding substantially to the form of the projection, on a plane, of a human foot placed on this plane;

- assembling (by cementing, riveting, or duplicate molding) the reinforcement to a front half-sole to obtain an intermediate piece.

Claim 26. (*Withdrawn*) A method of manufacturing the sole according to claim 25, wherein the assembly, obtained by duplicate molding, the assembly step comprises:

- placing the reinforcement in a mold whose cavity corresponds to the form of the front and/or rear (preferably front) half-sole of the sole;


- possibly placing in the mold at least one element for coupling to a sports apparatus, preferably a gliding support;

- duplicate molding the reinforcement by means of identical or different material(s), preferably different at least for the front half-sole and the rear half-sole;

- extracting from the mold the intermediate piece formed by the reinforcement on which the front half-sole (or the rear half-sole) is duplicate molded.

Claim 27. (*Withdrawn*) A method according to claim 26, wherein:

- a mold of the front (or rear) half-sole is used in the duplicate molding step;
- the duplicate molding of the front (or rear) half-sole is then undertaken according to the step 3;
- one then retrieves an intermediate piece formed by the reinforcement on which the front half-sole (or the rear half-sole) is duplicate molded.

 Claim 28. (*Withdrawn*) A method of manufacturing the sole according to claim 25, wherein, subsequent to the process, the rear half-sole (or the front half-sole) is fixed on the intermediate piece, for example by cementing.

Claim 29. (*Withdrawn*) A method according to claim 25, wherein:

- the intermediate piece is placed in a mold of the rear (or front) half-sole;
- the rear (or front) half-sole is duplicate molded;
- the sole comprising the duplicate molded reinforcement is extracted from the mold.

Claim 30. (*Withdrawn*) A method of manufacturing a boot, especially a sports boot, said method comprising:

- manufacturing an intermediate piece comprising a sole front portion on which a reinforcement is assembled;
- assembling the intermediate piece, preferably by cementing, to an upper portion of the boot (vamp/upper); and
- fixing a rear half-sole (or a front half-sole), preferably by cementing, on the intermediate piece assembled to the upper portion of the boot (vamp/upper).

Claim 31. (*Currently Amended*) A ~~boot, especially sports boot~~, wherein the boot it comprises a sole according to claim 1.

Claim 32. (*Withdrawn*) A ~~boot, especially sports boot~~, wherein the boot it comprises a sole manufactured by the method according to claim 25.

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Claim 34. (*Original*) A boot according to claim 31, adapted to be fixed on a sports apparatus, preferably pertaining to the group including:

- ski boot, in particular cross-country or telemark ski boot;
- cycling shoe;
- roller skate;
- ice skate;
- rowing;
- water ski;
- surf;
- snowboard;
- ski surf;
- wakeboard;
- climbing crampons.

Claim 35. (*Original*) A use of the sole according to claim 1.

Claim 36. (*Withdrawn*) A use of the sole according to the method of claim 25.

Claim 37. (*Withdrawn*) A use of the sole according to the intermediate piece as defined in claim 25.

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Claim 38. (*Withdrawn*) A use of the sole according to the manufacturing of a boot according to claim 30.

Claim 39. (*Previously Presented*) A sole according to claim 1, further comprising a plate to reinforce the sole, said plate having a shape corresponding substantially to a planar projection of a human foot.

Claim 40. (*New*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcement has a length corresponding substantially to at least 70% of the length of the sole.

Claim 41. (*New*) A sole according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcement has a length corresponding substantially to at least 80% of the length of the sole.

Claim 42. (*New*) A sole according to claim 10, further comprising at least one adherent and wear-resisting pad positioned on the lower surface of the sole in the front portion and/or rear portion.

Claim 43. (New) A sole for a boot, said sole comprising:

a front portion and a rear portion more rigid in longitudinal bending than the front portion;

at least one reinforcement positioned at least partially along both of said two portions, wherein:

the front portion comprises a front half-sole affixed to the reinforcement;

the rear portion comprises a rear half-sole affixed to the reinforcement;

the front and rear half-soles are assembled to one another in a junction zone of said half-soles, said junction zone of said half-soles extending at least partially above said one reinforcement.

Claim 44. (New) A sole for a boot according to claim 43, wherein at least one of the front and rear half-soles comprises at least one portion constructed to guide and to connect the sole to a sports apparatus.

Claim 45. (New) A sole for a boot according to claim 43, wherein the front and rear half-soles are assembled to one another in a junction zone at least with cement.

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Claim 46. (New) A sole for a boot according to claim 43, wherein the front and rear half-soles are assembled to one another in a junction zone at least with rivets.

Claim 47. (New) A sole for a boot according to claim 43, wherein the front and rear half-soles are assembled to one another in a junction zone at least by welding.

Claim 48. (New) A sports boot comprising:

a sole according to claim 43; and

an upper affixed to said sole.

Claim 49. (New) A boot comprising:

an upper;

an outer sole affixed to said upper, said sole comprising:

a front sole portion; and

a rear sole portion, said rear sole portion being more rigid in longitudinal bending than said front sole portion;

at least one reinforcement structure, ^{at least} said one reinforcement structure extending along at least partially each of said front and rear sole portions, ^{at least} and said one reinforcement structure comprises a structure more rigid than constituent materials of each of said front and rear sole portions;


said front and rear sole portions comprising two distinct non-unitary portions assembled together in a junction zone, said one reinforcement structure extending longitudinally through said junction zone.

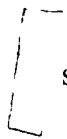
Claim 50. (New) A boot according to claim 49, wherein said one reinforcement structure has an outer periphery spaced from outer peripheries of both of said front and rear sole portions.

Claim 51. (New) A boot according to claim 49, wherein said sole further comprises tread members extending downwardly from at least one of said front and rear sole portions.

Claim 52. (*New*) A boot according to claim 49, wherein said sole further comprises tread members having been molded integrally with said constituent materials of said front and rear sole portions.

Claim 53. (*New*) A boot according to claim 49, wherein said one reinforcement structure is positioned above at least parts of said front and rear sole portions.

 Claim 54. (*New*) A boot according to claim 49, wherein said flexible front portion of said sole and said rigid rear portion of said sole meet at said junction zone located substantially rearward of a portion of said sole adapted to correspond to the metatarsophalangeal bending zone of a wearer's foot.

 Claim 55. (*New*) A boot according to claim 49, wherein said front and rear portions of said sole overlap one another in said junction zone and wherein said junction zone has an adjustable length, said length being dependent upon the size of said sole.

Claim 56. (*New*) A boot according to claim 55, wherein said rear portion of said sole overlaps said front portion of said sole in said junction zone.

Claim 57. (*New*) A boot according to claim 55, wherein said junction zone is located in and/or behind a portion of said sole adapted to correspond to the metatarsophalangeal bending zone of a wearer's foot.

Claim 58. (*New*) A boot according to claim 49, wherein said one reinforcement structure comprises at least one laminated or non-laminated plate extending from said junction zone, both on at least half of said front portion of said sole and on at least half of said rear portion of said sole.

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Claim 59. (*New*) A boot according to claim 49, wherein said sole has a predeterminate length and wherein said one reinforcement structure has a length corresponding substantially to at least 60% of the length of said sole.
